

TWO EFFIGY PIECES FROM MY COLLECTION

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I began collecting prehistoric artifacts in the early 1980s. Since that time I have had a fascination with effigy pieces. Whether pipes, engraved slate or stone, they are a direct connection to the prehistoric people's world view and spirituality. They lived in and with nature and their artifacts reflect such a connection.

Shown are two of my favorite pieces - a "fox-face" effigy (Fig. 1), and an owl effigy ridged gorget (Fig. 3).

The "fox face" effigy was first collected by A. E. Wehrle of Newark, Ohio, his catalog number 456W. The catalog says "Bird or animal effigy, gray banded slate, 3 1/2 inches long. Body is wide and flat and much wider at the top tapering down to form a small sharp point which could be called a nose. A short stubby tail. From each end on the side of the body has been drilled a tapering hole at an angle to meet a like tapering hole drilled from each side close to the bottom. Found in Seneca County,

Ohio." These drill holes are conical and will be discussed later. This effigy was one time in the Henry Sedlon collection.

I believe Wehrle's description is not complete. He fails to mention that at the end of the tail is an effigy carving which could be a fox face (Fig 2). This is one of the only two such effigies I know of. The other was collected by Dr. Russell Long of Ada, Ohio, and was pictured by Robert Converse in the *Ohio Archaeologist* page 28, Vol. 55, No. 4, Fall 2005. Converse believed that his effigy had been salvaged from a lizard effigy - probably by a later culture.

My effigy may also have been salvaged from a broken lizard effigy. Wehrle's description of the sharp point, which he calls a nose, is seen on some lizard effigies. Both pieces have conical drilling at each end and both are oblong. Where Dr. Long's piece was drilled from the top, mine is drilled from the side. My piece has a mouth while Dr. Long's does not.

One can only wonder whether there is any connection between these two artifacts, If anyone has a similar artifact or has information on a similar one please let me know.

The second effigy is a 2 1/2 inch humped ridge gorget (Fig. 3). It is made of banded slate and was found in Lake County, Ohio and was once part of the Al Waite and CC Smith collections.

The interesting feature of this piece is the hump or ridge which is grooved. The groove extends from the top to the bottom of the ridge. Instead of drill holes at each end it is drilled on either side of the ridge. These holes form eyes and the grooved ridge forms the nose of what appears to be the effigy of a barn owl. Even the banding around the face conforms to the natural brown line which encircles the barn owl's features.



Figure 1. Fox face effigy- side view.



Figure 2. Fox face effigy- front view.



Figure 3. Owl effigy humped gorget- front.



Figure 4. Barn Owl. Photo courtesy of Shaw Creek Bird Supply.com.



Figure 5. Owl effigy humped gorget-back.